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The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program

Under the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), millions of low-income and unemployed people receive Government commodities donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program was begun in December 1981 to distribute surplus foods to needy people. Today, some foods distributed under TEFAP are in surplus; others are specifically purchased for TEFAP with funds appropriated by Congress.

How Are Foods Allocated to States?

States are allocated commodities based on the number of persons in each State below the poverty level and the number of unemployed persons. Once the foods are made available to States, the organization and administration of the program is a State responsibility. Each State selects emergency feeding organizations (EFO's) to distribute the commodities and establishes the eligibility criteria for program participation. Some examples of EFO's are food banks, soup kitchens, and churches. The foods are then distributed to needy households by local EFO's. The frequency of the distributions, as well as the quantities of commodities to be distributed to local areas, are also determined by each State distributing agency.

What Are the Eligibility Requirements?

USDA regulations require State agencies to establish financial eligibility criteria. These criteria must include income-based standards and the methods by which persons may demonstrate eligibility under those standards. In most States, persons who participate in the following programs are automatically eligible to participate in TEFAP: Food Stamp Program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, and Energy Assistance.

What Foods Are Available?

The commodities distributed through TEFAP may vary from time to time depending on the agricultural market. The purchased foods must be nutritious, of reasonable price, and available in sufficient quantities for nationwide distribution. TEFAP foods may include flour, cornmeal, honey, butter, canned meat or poultry, peanut butter, canned beans or other vegetables and fruits, raisins, and other similar products. USDA provides these foods in package sizes that are suitable for household use. The TEFAP food package is intended as a supplement to other sources of food. It is not intended to be used as a household's sole or even primary food source.



Whom To Contact for TEFAP Foods

In many cases, information about distribution of food and eligibility may be found in local newspapers or heard over the radio. Anyone having questions concerning eligibility to participate or needing further information concerning distributions should contact:

Northeast Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
10 Causeway Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02222
Telephone: (617) 565-6370
*Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts,
New Hampshire, New York,
Rhode Island, Vermont*

Southeast Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
77 Forsyth Street, S.W., Suite 112
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: (404) 730-2566
*Alabama, Florida, Georgia,
Kentucky, Mississippi,
North Carolina, South Carolina,
Tennessee*

Midwest Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
50 East Washington Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Telephone: (312) 353-6664
*Illinois, Indiana, Michigan,
Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin*

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mercer Corporate Park
CN 02150
Trenton, New Jersey 08650
Telephone: (609) 259-5025
*Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey,
Pennsylvania, Washington, DC,
Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico,
Virgin Islands*

Southwest Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1100 Commerce Street, Room 5-C-30
Dallas, Texas 75242
Telephone: (214) 767-0222
*Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico,
Oklahoma, Texas*

Mountain Plains Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 903
Denver, Colorado 80204
Telephone: (303) 844-0300
*Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri,
Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming*

Western Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
550 Kearney Street, Room 400
San Francisco, California 94108
Telephone: (415) 465-1310
*Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona,
California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho,
Nevada, Oregon, Trust Territories,
Washington*

The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is available to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.